

Fidelity of Implementation

From the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities

Fidelity of implementation is the delivery of instruction in the way in which it was designed to be delivered. Fidelity must also address the integrity with which screening and progress-monitoring procedures are completed and an explicit decision-making model is followed. In an RtI model, fidelity is important at both the school level (implementation of the process) and the teacher level (implementation of instruction and progress monitoring).

Implementation of RtI needs to be standardized. Direct and frequent assessment of an intervention for fidelity is considered to be best practice. When researching the effectiveness of an intervention, it is critical to be able to report the fidelity with which it was implemented so that any resulting gains in student achievement can accurately attributed to the intervention under scrutiny and so that the intervention may be replicated. When implementing an intervention, it is critical to know whether it is being implemented as designed, so that if the intervention is initially unsuccessful, schools can take appropriate measures to remedy the deficiency rather than abandoning the entire reform.

Specific proactive practices that help to ensure fidelity of implementation include the following:

- Link interventions to improved outcomes (credibility)
- Definitively describe operations, techniques, and components
- Clearly define responsibilities of specific persons
- Create a data system for measuring operations, techniques, and components
- Create a system for feedback and decision making (formative)
- Create accountability measures for non-compliance